

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-04 IO-06 NSCE-00 PM-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0936
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 14422

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: EAIR, PGOV, WB, US
SUBJECT: NATIONAL AIRLINES SERVICE TO BERLIN

REF: STATE 189499

1. IN PRINCIPLE EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME A NATIONAL SERVICE OF THE TYPE OUTLINED IN REFTEL. ADDITIONAL SERVICE AND PARTICULARLY THE INTRODUCTION ON A SCHEDULED BASIS OF WIDE-BODIED EQUIPMENT WOULD GIVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO BERLIN AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE CONTINUED U.S. INTEREST IN BERLIN'S VIABILITY.

2. THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SUCH A SERVICE, HOWEVER, RAISE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS:

A. ECONOMIC - WE HAVE NOT SEEN NATIONAL'S PROJECTIONS ON THE ECONOMICS OF SUCH A NEW SERVICE, BUT WE HAVE DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER
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BERLIN CAN ABSORB AN ADDITIONAL SCHEDULED CARRIER. WE THINK THIS POINT SHOULD BE VERY CAREFULLY STUDIED, SINCE OTHER ALLIED CARRIERS COULD FIND THEIR PROFITABILITY, AND THUS THEIR VIABILITY, AFFECTED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL'S NEW SERVICE.

B. POLITICAL - THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH MAY
WELL OPPOSE AN ADDITIONAL U.S. SCHEDULED
CARRIER, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS WOULD FURTHER
TILT BERLIN AIR TRAFFIC TOWARDS U.S. CARRIERS.

SOVIET REACTION LIKELY TO BE UNFAVORABLE. THE NEW
CARRIER WOULD NOT LAND AT ANY FRG CITY AND THUS
WOULD CUT ACROSS THE SOVIET ARGUMENT THAT THE CORRIDORS
EXIST ONLY FOR THE RESUPPLY OF ALLIED GARRISONS IN
BERLIN.

3. ON BALANCE THEN OUR INITIAL REACTION IS GUARDED.
WE ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL AS DESIRABLE, BUT BELIEVE
ITS ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION MAY BE DUBIOUS AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE FRENCH AND
BRITISH, SERIOUS. WE AGREE THAT WHAT IS NEEDED IS
A CAREFUL STUDY OF NATIONAL'S CASE, PARTICULARLY
ITS ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION.

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